

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Comment on USIA Study, "Estimate of Free World Reaction Country by Country, to Three Possible Courses of Action by the US in Quemoy-Matsu," of 6 September 1958

1. Commenting upon the findings of this study is a considerable challenge because of the detail and precision of its country-by-country judgments and the rather broad terms used in defining the study's problem. We feel that Free World reactions to the three given courses of action would depend to a considerable extent upon a number of contingencies which are not identified in the statement of the problem. These would include the context, timing, weapons and targets, and the total mode or rationale of US intervention or non-intervention. Furthermore, the reactions would vary if on the one hand the US intervention were for the purpose of breaking Chinese Communist harassment of offshore island resupply operations, or, on the other, it were for the purpose of assisting in the defense of the offshore islands against a Chinese Communist effort to seize them by assault. *

* SNIE 100-12-58: "Probable Developments in the Taiwan Strait Crisis (28 October 1958); NIE 100-4-55: "Communist Capabilities and Intentions with Respect to the Offshore Islands and Taiwan through 1955, and Communist and Non-Communist Reactions with Respect to the Defense of Taiwan." (16 March 1955).

2. Our principal differences with the broad conclusions stated on page 1 of the study are that:

a. We would anticipate less governmental approval (especially in Europe) than the study indicates, in the event of US intervention with conventional weapons to end Chinese Communist harassment of Quemoy-Matsu resupply operations.

b. We would expect a somewhat greater sense of apprehension among Asian governments concerning future Chinese Communist and US intentions, in the event that the US had decided not to intervene militarily in Quemoy-Matsu resupply operations. If the US did not intervene in the event of an attempted Chinese Communist invasion of the offshore islands, this apprehension would be increased considerably.



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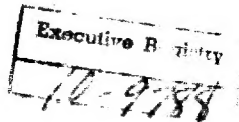
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d. In the event of a Chinese Communist attack on the offshores and a US decision not to intervene militarily, loss of US prestige would be markedly greater than it would be in the case of US non-intervention in the face of Chinese Communist harassment of Quemoy-Matsu resupply.

3. Aside from the comments above, we do not take major exception to the summary of reactions in the Far East (page 12). The summaries of reactions in Europe (page 2) and in the Near East, South Asia and Africa (page 6) do not differ greatly with the views of this office. We note an inconsistency with respect and 6). The present Lebanon government would probably condemn intervention with nuclear weapons rather than take a neutralist stand as indicated on page six.

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6 December 1958



Mr. Abbott Washburn
Deputy Director
United States Information Agency
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Washburn:

Following upon my telephone call to you of a week or so ago, I forward herewith my staff's views on your paper on free world reactions to possible US courses of action in the off-shore islands situation. You may wish to transmit them to the [redacted] for filing with the parent document.

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Please allow me to apologize again for the oversight which has resulted in so long a delay. I hope that if the need for our assistance should arise again we can do a prompter job.

Sincerely yours,

Sherman Kent
Assistant Director

attachment

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